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Vermont Awarded \$23M Grant to Support Children, Families and the Early Childhood System

The federal grant will help to improve outcomes and access to services for Vermont children from birth to age 8

Jan. 30, 2023 (MONTPELIER, Vt.)—Vermont has been awarded a \$23 million federal grant to strengthen the state’s early childhood system, support the early childhood workforce and improve the quality and availability of services for children from birth to age 8. The Preschool Development Grant (PDG) Renewal Grant will provide the state with approximately \$7.7 million per year for three years (2023–2025), with \$2 million of subgrants going to local communities annually to support mental health care for children and families, high-quality child care and family engagement along with support for the early childhood workforce.

The award will support Vermont in improving service delivery to families with young children across settings and services, including child care, Universal Prekindergarten Education, Head Start, health care, mental health care and other services and programs that support the health and well-being of Vermont children and their families.

“This investment in Vermont’s early childhood system will move Vermont forward on the critical work identified with broad stakeholder input to improve outcomes for children and families.” said Morgan Crossman, executive director of Building Bright Futures (BBF), the state’s early childhood State Advisory Council and Network. “We are particularly excited to continue utilizing the expertise of communities and professionals working directly with children and families and the early childhood workforce, as well as partnering with, and learning from families themselves.”

The new grant-funded initiative, titled “Vermont Integration Project: Building Integration in Vermont’s Birth-5 Early Childhood Systems (VIP B-5),” was awarded to the Vermont Agency of Human Services’ Child Development Division and will be collaboratively directed by Building Bright Futures, the Vermont Department of Health’s Division of Maternal and Child Health, the Vermont Agency of Education, and the Vermont Department of Mental Health.

“Investing and supporting early childhood education is a top priority for Vermont, and this grant will go a long way in supporting our efforts,” said Governor Phil Scott. “I want to thank our federal partners, Building Bright Futures, and all of our partners for their continued commitment to building strong foundations for future generations.”

VIP B-5 will build on the work conducted under a one-year PDG Planning Grant that Vermont received in 2018. The new funding will bolster the state’s existing early childhood infrastructure, investments and partnerships. Through VIP B-5, Vermont will:

- Prioritize equitable and inclusive access to Vermont's mixed-delivery system of early childhood care and education, which includes licensed family and center-based child care programs, public schools, Head Start and community-based organizations.
- Support the early childhood workforce by providing professional development and training opportunities, utilization of the Vermont Early Learning Standards and better integrating health and mental health care with early childhood care and education programs.
- Seek out input from families about the needs of Vermont's young children, create leadership opportunities for families and increase access to early childhood resources, services and supports.
- Update Vermont's Early Childhood Action Plan (VECAP), the five-year strategic plan for the state's early childhood system.
- Strengthen monitoring and accountability practices through data integration, evaluation and continuous quality improvement efforts.

Further details of grant activities, key partners, funding and how to get involved can be found at buildingbrightfutures.org/pdg.

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The mission of Building Bright Futures (BBF) is to improve the well-being of each and every child and family in Vermont by using evidence to inform policy and bringing voices together to discuss critical challenges and problem solve. Building Bright Futures (BBF) is Vermont's early childhood public-private partnership, charged under Vermont Title 33 § Chapter 46 and the Federal Head Start Act (Public Law 110-134) as Vermont's Early Childhood State Advisory Council (SAC), the mechanism used to advise the Governor and Legislature on the well-being of children in the prenatal period through age 8 and their families. BBF's Network infrastructure includes 12 Regional Councils, seven VECAP Committees, and the State Advisory Council. BBF maintains the vision and strategic plan for Vermont's Early Childhood System. Learn more at buildingbrightfutures.org.